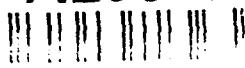


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THE U.S. MILITARY AND DISASTER RESPONSE

BY

COLONEL EDWARD M. KELLY JR.  
United States Army

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THE U.S. MILITARY AND DISASTER RESPONSE  
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## ABSTRACT

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The current world scene is changing at an unprecedented pace, and U.S. policy makers are struggling to define a clear guide for the future. One constant in all of this struggling is the fact that the military will be used in disaster relief operations. There are challenges for the military in disaster relief operations and they may well be the most significant endeavor a battalion or brigade commander faces during his command. This paper introduces to the Army in the field how the military interfaces with the civilian community and other federal agencies when conducting disaster relief operations. DOD has established set procedures and an organization designed to make order out of the chaos of disaster relief. The paper discusses disasters, military relief operations, regulatory guidance and the relief process. The paper concludes with a listing of available references and on-going actions.

## INTRODUCTION

Commanders and potential commanders, here is a heads-up you do not want to ignore. It concerns what may well be the single most significant endeavor for your battalion or brigade during your tenure in command. Whether it be responding to a hurricane, hail storm, flood, firestorm or earthquake, the armed forces are often the first and most visible presence on the scene of a natural disaster. Your battalion or brigade that was one day trained and ready for war is cast, center-stage, in a surreal environment of destruction and loss of life. Your soldiers will face fellow Americans reeling in disbelief from the loss of all that they knew. Responding to a natural disaster can stress any military unit to the limit. Stress abounds, with no real enemy to focus the unit's energies against and responsible for functions heretofore untrained on and for the most part unfamiliar with. No longer does that mission belong to another unit, regardless of your unit, the wise commander assumes and plans for the fact that it will happen. The changes in society with state and local governments unable to cope with the challenges disasters present, make it more and more likely that you will be called. In 1990, the National Guard responded to 292 state emergencies. Seventy-seven of the 292 were natural disasters.<sup>1</sup> Since 1989, over 11,000 active duty military have assisted in disaster relief

operations.<sup>2</sup>

The challenges facing disaster relief operations are immense. Department of Defense (DOD) recognizes this challenge and provides guidance for its smooth and efficient execution. The problem is the dissemination of and familiarization with the plans and guidance available. This paper will provide the reader a single source precis which will orient on the material available should your unit be called and more in-depth information and guidance on a particular disaster or relief function is required.

DOD has established set procedures and an organization designed to make order out of this chaos. It has been important for DOD to develop this capability. As recent experience demonstrates, the requirement for military relief to natural disasters will increase in frequency, diversity, and intensity.

The fact is that we in the military will continue to be called upon to assist civilian communities after disaster strikes. This paper will discuss the DOD response process to a catastrophic natural disaster. It will look at why the military is considered appropriate for disaster relief, the legal basis for use of the military, and the tasks undertaken by the military in disaster situations. Problems associated with such activity are discussed, as is the interface between military and civilian communities during these crises. Also discussed is how the federal, state and local agencies have established organizations and developed procedures to address the problems of military-

civilian relations in a disaster. This paper is background, designed to encourage further reading by commanders and operations officers and to provide continuity between published information and directions and potential users of that material.

This paper will focus on military assistance during and after natural disasters. It will not consider those disasters caused by conflict, war, or actions of military organizations during civil disturbances and riotous disorders. This information is important to the field because of the following general trends: 1. an increasing number of major disasters to which the military is asked to respond; 2. increasing number and forms of aid and functions which the military is asked to perform; 3. increasing lack of local and state budgets and organizations able to cope with the widespread impact of recent disasters; and, 4. a lack of familiarity with existing guidance by those in command and those going into command.

#### THE MEANING OF DISASTER

As the USAA Foundation pamphlet entitled, Surviving A Natural Disaster, tells us; the only thing predictable about Mother Nature is her unpredictability. In 1989, she dealt the nation several devastating blows as Hurricane Hugo swept through the Carolinas and the Loma Prieta earthquake rocked California. In 1990, she pelted Denver with softball-sized hail and ignited firestorms in Santa Barbara. On 22 January, 1992, CNN reported

that insurance had paid out over \$4.2 billion in claims resulting from catastrophic natural disasters in 1991.

As more and more people flee city congestion and suburban sprawl for the quiet and beauty of a home in the country, they fall prey to a dramatically increasing threat of wildfire. Fire officials call it the "wildland/urban interface"; homes built in what was once uninhabited wildland, surrounded by the flammable fuels naturally found in forests, prairies, hillsides or valleys. In 1990, more than 700 homes were lost to wildfires.<sup>3</sup>

Floods are natural, and inevitable occurrences, along rivers and streams throughout the United States. Melting snow, rainfall, hurricanes and the amount of water already in the ground and the type and slope of the land all affect flood severity. Floods can happen anywhere. Some 11 million households and \$758 billion worth of property are located on flood plains.<sup>4</sup>

Thunderstorms are another potential source of disaster, with storms packing enough power to equal 10 atomic bombs the size that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. A thunderstorm's side effects of hail, lightning and flooding can also be deadly. Hail destroys almost \$1 billion in crops annually, smashes windows and damages cars. Lightning kills about 100 people every year, starts fires and does millions of dollars in damage, especially to utilities. Flash floods destroy property and crop land, and kill about 165 people a year in the US.<sup>5</sup>

The destruction from these disasters each year leaves several

dead, thousands homeless and others reeling in disbelief as property losses soar into the billions. The most serious of all these natural disasters is the earthquake. Earthquakes have occurred in 39 states and almost every area of the country is at risk.<sup>6</sup>

The 1964 Alaska earthquake, measuring 8.4 on the Richter scale, was the most powerful in the United States in this century. The most powerful quakes in American history took place in 1811 and 1812 along the New Madrid Fault, which runs from near Memphis, Tennessee, to Southern Illinois. Estimated at between 8.4 and 8.7 on the Richter scale, this series of quakes altered and temporarily reversed the flow of the Mississippi River, caused damage in Chicago and Cincinnati, and rang church bells as far away as Boston and New York City.<sup>7</sup>

Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest, Montana, Idaho, Nevada and Utah have all experienced significant earthquakes. The potential in the eastern United States is less well-known, but an 1886 earthquake at Charleston, South Carolina, was estimated at 6.8 on the Richter scale.<sup>8</sup>

The preceding all goes to show that disasters come in many forms and can happen anywhere. It does not describe what a disaster is. The best definition I have found for a disaster

includes the sociological consequences of the physical event as well as the alterations of the physical environment. It reads:

"...an event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society or a community undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented."<sup>9</sup>

Among the characteristics inherent in a catastrophic natural disaster requiring military assistance include community service organizations pushed beyond their capabilities and having to supplement their ranks, organizations having to assume unusual activities and functions that they are neither organized or manned to complete, and having to adjust to new patterns of coordination and control.

There are two primary time stages after a disaster strikes. An emergency period lasting about ten days and a rehabilitation period when the sense of urgency steadily declines and many normal social functions are once again resumed. The emergency period is the time frame of greatest military involvement and greatest challenge for military-civilian relations. After this period, a rapid disengagement of the military from the disaster-struck community occurs.

## WHY THE MILITARY?

Military organizations are very complex structures and to be effective are characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules and a hierarchy of authority. The specialization of functions and the need to coordinate and control this diversity and channel it to accomplishment of a particular mission results in an organization ideally suited for contingency operations the likes of disaster relief.

Military organizations have the necessary structure for coordinating and controlling large forces. In addition, they have immediately available crucial equipment and supplies, so necessary for communities stuck by disaster. Military organizations orient towards anticipating every contingency. These expectations of the unexpected mark the military as ready to respond to the unanticipated demands of a disaster situation.

As will be discussed later, it is also the logic used to justify assigning DOD the most challenging functions during a crisis as well as responsibility to assist in every aspect of federal assistance. The ability of the military to adjust rapidly is a result of its organization. This organization enables the military organization to operate extensively and intensively in disaster situations.

As was already mentioned, the only thing predictable about

Mother Nature is her unpredictability. The opposite is often said about the military and when you combine the two you face the challenges of military assistance to disaster-struck communities. To the commander of the 24th Infantry Division, in September, 1989 his wartime mission and the tools to accomplish that mission were pretty much standard, well understood and constantly trained on. That is until the order was given to him to go to South Carolina and do good for the residents who just experienced hurricane Hugo. The Commander passed the order on to his subordinates, "go to South Carolina and do good". This energized a response which saw engineers and military police performing those duties relevant to their military specialty, but also saw a mechanized infantry battalion operating a distribution center in concert with a truck company from the DISCOM.<sup>10</sup> In all, DOD received 16 taskings including airlift, fuel, generators, security, aerial spraying and equipment and debris removal. DOD employed over 3000 active duty service members from all four services in Hurricane Hugo disaster response activities.<sup>11</sup>

The Commander of the 9th Infantry Division was directed to provide assistance to the Boise Interagency Fire Control (BIFC) and so began two tours of fighting forest fires for an artillery battalion commander and his battalion. In the 1988 fire season, two Army battalions from Ft. Lewis, and two USMC battalions from Camp Pendelton formed JTF Yellowstone to support firefighting efforts against the well publicized Yellowstone fires. A separate two battalion task force from Ft. Lewis was deployed at the same

time to fight fires in the Lewis and Clark National Forest. A sizable aviation package supported the Yellowstone effort. In 1989, battalions from several posts were alerted for duty, and four battalions were deployed in two separate two battalion task forces to support BIFC operations in Oregon and Idaho. Aviation assets from across the United States were also deployed to assist.<sup>12</sup>

The lessons the 24th Infantry Division learned in South Carolina, combined with those of the 9th Infantry Division and many other disaster relief operations have resulted in solid plans and references that should be a part of every G3 shop. A listing of those plans and references will end this paper.

#### REGULATORY GUIDANCE

At the local level, the mayor or county executive has quick reaction assets available to respond to disasters. These assets include capabilities in the areas of fire and rescue units, police, public health, hospitals, public works, social services and transportation. When the requirements exceed the local government capabilities the request for state assistance is made.<sup>13</sup>

The state governor is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of individuals within the territorial limits of the state during periods of emergency or crisis. The governor may be

expected to direct measures that must be taken to satisfy these requirements. A wide range of capabilities can be found in the various state governmental departments or offices. Within each state, there is a specific office in the state government that is charged by state statutes or regulations to assist the governor in carrying out his emergency responsibilities. The titles of these offices vary from state to state. Examples of some of the titles are Department of Emergency Services, Department of Defense, Public Safety, or Office of Emergency Services. The Office of Emergency Services is the most common title. These offices coordinate state efforts in providing state assistance to local governments and with Federal agencies in obtaining Federal assistance. At the state level, functional support to the Emergency Services office would include public affairs, human resources, public safety, transportation, commerce and resources and military assistance through the National Guard.<sup>14</sup>

There is a difference between the involvement of the National Guard, a state organization primarily, and the participation of federal forces. The authority to involve National Guard units and their resources in emergency activities following a disaster belongs to the state governor. The Guard is usually mobilized at the request of local authorities when it appears that the problems engendered by the disaster are beyond their capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

Local governments and organizations are the first line of defense against disasters, with state assistance being requested

only when local means are exhausted. The participation of federal forces in civilian disaster operations raises many concerns. In this regard, stated federal policy is quite explicit about the primacy of local and then state response, and that military will support not control civil government.

Direction to plan for and on-order conduct disaster relief operations comes from the highest levels. In his National Security Strategy of the United States, published in August, 1991, the President writes that we will "focus our efforts and resources on five major challenges"...one of which is..."Meeting urgent human needs. We will respond quickly and substantially to the suffering caused by natural or manmade disasters." In the JCS Publication 3-07, page V-5 states, "Increasingly, US Forces will be called upon and must be trained, equipped and prepared to conduct humanitarian assistance, civil affairs, psychological operations, and disaster relief." In the U.S. Army's Long Range Planning Guidance (C), FY2001-2021, published in June, 1991, on page 9, under the title of the Army's Strategic Roles, unclassified, it states "Provide support to civil authorities by participating in activities such as disaster relief, emergency assistance, and interdicting illicit drug traffic." The President, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Army leadership all make it perfectly clear that the opportunity to be called upon to conduct disaster relief could well be the next challenge we as soldiers are presented with. Familiarization with the following will assist us in meeting that challenge.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended, assigns the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as the responsible agency for coordination of Federal assistance in a Presidentially declared major disaster. The Stafford Act defines FEMA authorities and constraints for assistance as:

- local government has primary response responsibility.
- federal assistance is designed to supplement local/state government and relief organizations.
- FEMA may assign a mission to any Federal agency.
- FEMA only responds after Presidential declaration.
- Director FEMA appoints a Federal Coordinating Officer, (FCO), to represent the President, the Director FEMA, and to coordinate the Federal response.<sup>16</sup>

FEMA has other missions which include; support of state and local governments in a wide range of disaster planning, preparedness, mitigation response, and recovery efforts, coordinate Federal aid for Presidentially declared disasters and emergencies, administer hurricane preparedness program, coordinate civil emergency preparedness for radiological accidents, including those at nuclear power plants and hazardous materials incidents, provide training, education and exercises to enhance the professional development of Federal, State and local emergency managers, administer insurance aspects of the flood loss reduction efforts, and the risk assessment activities of the National Flood Insurance Program, and act as lead agency for National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program. As will be discussed later and can be seen by this very extensive list of missions, FEMA is neither resourced nor functionally prepared to

respond to a disaster without considerable assistance. The critical function of FEMA is to serve as a focal point for the many missions listed above.<sup>17</sup>

DOD Directive 3025.1, Use of Military Resources During Peacetime Civil Emergencies within the United States, Its Territories, and Possessions, 23 May 1980, assigns the Secretary of the Army as the DOD Executive Agent, and the Director of Military Support (DOMS), to act for the Executive Agent. Therefore, military support to disaster relief operations becomes an Army coordinated, joint operation designed to supplement state and local authorities in their efforts to save lives, prevent human suffering and/or mitigate great property damage.

DOD distinguishes two similar systems:

- Military Support to Civil Defense (MSCD)- provides planning and training for the life-saving and logistical assistance civil authorities may need in wartime.
- Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) - involves military response to civil requests in peacetime disasters.

These systems and their acronyms are often confused but are important because legal and operational procedures affect each differently. This Directive further stipulates that:

- DOD resources will be limited to those not immediately required for the execution of the primary defense mission.
- DOD resources will be committed as a supplement to non-DOD resources.
- Military personnel will be under command of and directly responsible to their military superiors and will not be used to enforce or execute civil law in violation of 18 USC 1385 (Posse Comitatus), see Tab.
- Military resources will not be procured, stockpiled, or developed solely to provide assistance during emergencies.<sup>18</sup>

#### PROCESS DISCUSSION

The requirements for DOD response are increasing in complexity and result from new threats such as drugs and terrorism and expanding requests for military assistance in civil emergencies and disasters. Historically, the military has been the first federal organization to respond during domestic disasters. When considered in conjunction with the magnitude of recent disasters, the widespread interstate damage, exceeding state and local relief capabilities, it confirms the need for a coordinated, responsive organization.

Since 1980, all defense planning for civil emergencies has been conducted hand in glove with FEMA. FEMA has led in preparing the current plans for Federal assistance. In 1988, President Reagan directed federal departments and agencies to plan for those natural and technological domestic disasters that could threaten our national security. Today, some 27 agencies and departments are involved and each has created plans for employment of its assets. Every attempt was made to align functions with resources available. Concurrent with these endeavors the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Department of Energy increased planning for radiological emergencies. Additionally, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Coast Guard expanded planning to handle hazardous spills and the Forestry Service expanded interagency planning for fighting forest fires. A more expanded discussion on each of these concurrent planning operations and the military's involvement

follows this section.

The disaster declaration process is:

- Governor requests Presidential declaration.
- FEMA evaluates request.
- FEMA sends recommendation to President.
- President declares disaster (or does not declare).
- FEMA appoints FCO.
- FCO establishes Disaster Field Office.
- Governor appoints State Coordinating Officer (SCO).<sup>19</sup>

A major disaster declaration by the President is a prerequisite for Federal response and recovery operations. It is important to note, however, that installation commanders can provide emergency support to save lives, prevent suffering or to protect property prior to a Presidential declaration. Normally the President will declare a major disaster in a local community whenever assistance outside the state is needed.

Subsequent to Presidential declaration, FEMA issues mission assignments to various Federal agencies to undertake response/recovery operations. FEMA is neither resourced nor functionally prepared to respond to a disaster without considerable assistance. FEMA is authorized and has established a program of disaster preparedness that uses the services of all appropriate federal agencies. To coordinate this program, FEMA and the 27 agencies with identified responsibilities have developed the Federal Natural Disaster Response Plan (Figure 1).<sup>20</sup> The Plan outlines the assumptions, policies, concept of operations, organizational structures and specific assignments of responsibility to departments and agencies which form the basis for Federal response.<sup>21</sup>

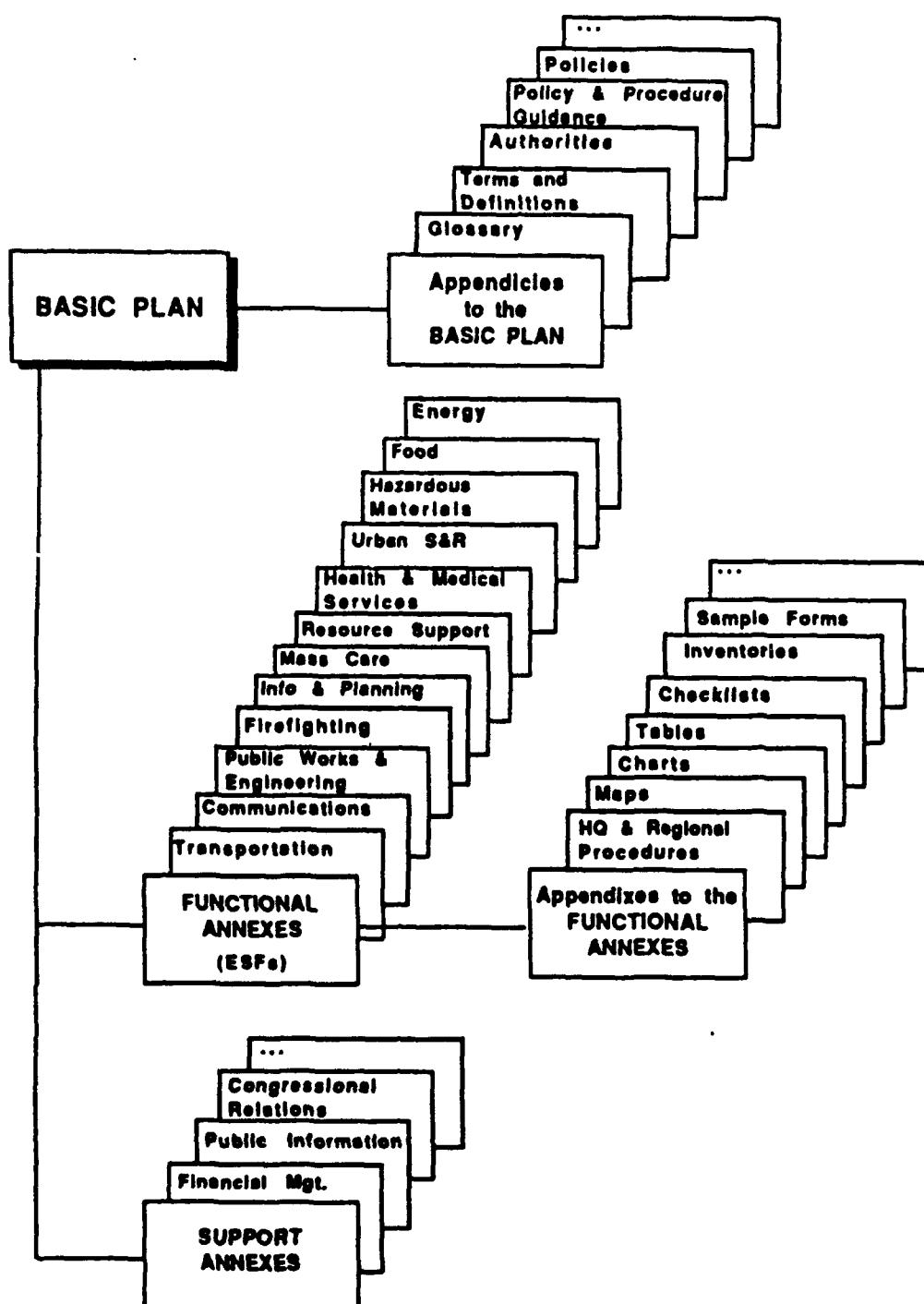


Figure 1 - Components of the Federal Natural Disaster Response Plan<sup>22</sup>

#	1 TRANSPORTATION	2 COMMUNICATIONS	3 PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING	4 FIREFIGHTING	5 INFORMATION AND PLANNING	6 MASS CARE	7 RESOURCE SUPPORT	8 HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES	9 URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE	10 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	11 FOOD	12 ENERGY
ORG	ESF											
USDA	S	S	S	P	S	S		S	S	S	P	S
DOC				S	S	S				S		
DOD	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	S	S	S
DOEd					S							
DOE	S		S		S		S			S		P
DHHS					S	S	S	P	S	S	S	
DHUD						S						
DOI	S	S	S	S	S	S		S	S	S		S
DOJ	S						S	S		S		
DOL		S				S		S	S			
DOS	S									S		S
TREAS							S*					
DOT	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
VA					S	S	S	S	S			
OFDA								S				
ARC					S	P		S			S	
USACE	S		P	S	S			S	S			S
EPA		S	S	S				S	S	P	S	
FCC	S											
FEMA	S		S	P	S	S	S	S	S	S		
GSA	S	S	S	S	S	P		S				S
ICC	S											
NASA					S							
NCS		P			S		S	S				S
NRC					S					S		S
OPM							S					
USPS	S					S		S				

P - PRIMARY AGENCY: RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE ESF.

S - SUPPORT AGENCY: RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING THE PRIMARY AGENCY

\* as needed

Figure 2 - Emergency Support Function (ESF) Assignment Matrix<sup>23</sup>

The Federal Natural Disaster Response Plan involves 27 agencies providing 12 Emergency Support Functions (ESF), as shown in Figure 2<sup>24</sup>. DOD and therefore the Army is the primary agency responsible for coordinating and conducting Urban Search and Rescue, with support agency responsibilities in the other 11 support functions. The Army Corps of Engineers is the primary agency responsible for Public Works and Engineering.

The Director of Military Support (DOMS), is a joint staff agency which acts for the Executive Agent. DOMS coordinates DOD assistance, develops procedures, monitors employment of DOD resources and establishes and maintains liaison with FEMA. CINCFOR is the commander in charge of the DOD assistance effort in CONUS. The CONUSA commander is responsible for actual conduct of the disaster assistance effort through the DCO. The DCO coordinates with the FCO and is positioned at the scene to coordinate DOD activities. The Director FEMA assigns an experienced manager of civil emergency planning as his liaison officer to CINCFOR. This civilian works directly with FORSCOM J5. A number of Army activities, as requested by CINCFOR, provide support to the DCO through the CONUSA. Outside the continental United States, Army assets may be requested for any disaster including fire, flood, environmental, nuclear, hurricane and earthquake. Regardless of where or for what deployed, military units will maintain integrity and chain of command, and the smallest unit considered for deployment is a company. USCINCLANT has DOD assistance responsibility in Puerto Rico and

the Virgin Islands, USCINCPAC has responsibility for Alaska, Hawaii and for US Pacific Territories and Possessions.<sup>25</sup>

Major responsibilities can be summarized as:

DOMS - Act for the DOD Executive Agent

- Develop policy

- Monitor employment of DOD resources

- Establish and maintain liaison with FEMA.

CINCFOR - Delegated authority of DOD Executive Agent to coordinate and direct employment of all DOD components in CONUS.

- Report to DOMS

- Establish and maintain liaison with FEMA.

- Establish procedures for ESF #9.

CONUSA - Plan and conduct disaster relief operations.

- Appoint a DCO as directed by CINCFOR

- Coordinate requests for military assistance.

- Coordinate and direct DOD resources in the disaster area.

- Provide Defense Coordinating Element to DCO.

SERVICES/CINCS/MACOMS

- Support CINCFOR as directed by DOMS.

- Take action in local imminent serious situation.

- Provide resources for disaster relief on request.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

- Establish and maintain disaster relief liaison with the DCO.

- Coordinate all military engineering and construction tasks through District Engineer.

- Establish policy and procedures for ESF #3.

- Execute statutory responsibilities for emergency response and recovery.<sup>26</sup>

The infrastructure required to meet the steady growth of planning requirements for response to civil emergencies continues to expand. Current efforts as defense planners work with federal regions and states, installations and local communities are to decentralize for timely response.

Both reserve and active officers in various duties have

gained extraordinary knowledge and experience for planning and executing emergency response with civil agencies. The reservists add their military expertise to their diverse backgrounds and interests which provide fringe benefits such as executive-level civilian experience in distribution, utilities management, and familiarity with their communities.<sup>27</sup>

FORSCOM and FEMA conduct joint training programs to coordinate the training and forge the skills of defense planners and liaison officers for work with the civil sector. Combined exercises are also conducted which test contingency plans and procedures at state, region and national levels.

DOD has created Regional Military Emergency Coordinator (RMEC) teams. The RMEC teams were designed in the 1980s to plan for and respond to wartime emergencies. However, due to increasing civil demands to react to natural disasters their composition has been altered. Today, a team has been created for each of FEMA's ten regions. Each team is tasked to meet the needs of any emergency management or planning structure the federal government may organize at the region level. The teams range from seven to 12 people, including a mix of active and reserve military officers and defense civil servants. The RMEC team coordinates defense capabilities for efficient utilization and facilitates a "two-way street" for sharing civil and military resources.<sup>28</sup>

## EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes are a destructive force surpassing anything man has devised, short of a nuclear war. A catastrophic earthquake is the most likely natural occurring event in which the entire Federal government would be called upon to assist state and local governments to save lives and protect property. An earthquake is deemed catastrophic based upon the combined effects of the earthquake itself (magnitude, duration, and type of earth movement), when and where it occurs, the population impacted, and potential for destruction.<sup>29</sup> The draft Federal Response Plan, dated January 1991, is the latest plan for responding to any catastrophic disaster.

As discussed earlier, the Plan outlines policies, planning assumptions, concept of operations, organizational structure, and specific Federal agency responsibilities.

Upon notification of a catastrophic earthquake, DOD will establish the national Emergency Support Function (ESF) # 9, Urban Search and Rescue-Crisis Response Cell in the Army Operations Center. All support agencies will be notified and tasked to provide 24-hour representation. FORSCOM will establish a regional ESF in the disaster area through the supporting CONUSA. Operational requirements and requests will be tasked to the lowest level with the necessary planning and supervisory capability. As the primary agency for Urban Search and Rescue

(USR), DOD has authority and responsibility to carry out the requirements of this function, including tasking authority over support agencies and command over all Federal assets used for USR. USR will be carried out as a military operation with a military task force in coordination with and at the direction of state and local authorities. General USR planning assumptions

- are:
- Time critical operation.
  - Local/state assets overwhelmed.
  - Local residents will assist.
  - Specialized equipment and personnel available.
  - Immediate response of Federal agencies.
  - Aftershocks and secondary effects will hamper operations.
  - Significant number of missing persons.
  - Tactical communications will be required.
  - Initial medical treatment will be provided.<sup>30</sup>

The supporting CONUSA also establishes a regional ESF #9 Task Force at the Disaster Field Office as the USR staff agency for the FCO. The task force may be multi-Service and will be augmented with specialized civilian personnel and equipment. All Federal personnel involved in USR will be under operational control of a task force commander. Non-Federal augmentation will be administratively controlled by the task force commander. USR operations are conducted through the use of USR companies consisting of approximately 200 military personnel and augmentees.<sup>31</sup>

#### MASS CASUALTIES

A major catastrophic earthquake will demand the assistance of public health and medical services. Casualty estimates could

range from 12000 to more than 250,000, depending on the location, duration, and time of the incident. In the face of massive increases in demand, medical supplies and equipment may be in short supply. Damage to chemical and industrial plants, sewer lines and water distribution systems will result in toxic environmental and public health hazards to the surviving population. The Federal response to this aspect of the crisis is the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). Its purpose is to supplement state and local resources. NDMS is a national medical response system, the major components of which include medical response, patient evacuation, and definitive medical care in participating non-Federal hospitals throughout CONUS.<sup>32</sup>

At this time over 1500 civilian hospitals in 40 states have signed up to provide over 100,000 beds if needed. The NDMS program is coordinated locally by designated Federal hospitals from DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). These are called Federal Coordinating Centers (FCC), and serve as a planning focus before activation and as the area focal point after activation.<sup>33</sup>

#### WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING

Any small fire in a wooded area, if not quickly detected and extinguished, can get out of control. An uncontrolled fire is one of the most destructive forces caused by nature or by man. It is a multiple killer of people, livestock, fish, and wildlife.

It can destroy property, timber, forage, watersheds, recreational facilities, and scenic value. Severe soil erosion, silting of stream beds and reservoirs, and flooding are often the legacy of uncontrolled fire.<sup>34</sup>

The Federal response to wildfires centers primarily on the Boise Interagency Fire Center (BIFC), the Department's of Agriculture, Commerce and the Interior, and to a lesser degree the Department of Defense and the Tennessee Valley Authority. States have passed laws and set up State agencies to protect State and local lands. It is the policy of DOD to provide emergency assistance to Federal agencies in the form of personnel, equipment, supplies, or fire protection services in cases where a forest or grassland fire emergency is beyond the capabilities of available resources. There are two situations in which DOD can provide such assistance:

1. At the request of BIFC when
  - Fire is on Federal, State or private lands.
  - Available civilian resources committed.
  - No competition with private enterprise.
2. Pursuant to the Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288).
  - Fire on State or private lands.
  - Disaster declared by the President.
  - Requested by FCO or FEMA Regional Director.
  - Not normally associated with Federal property.<sup>35</sup>

When BIFC requires military assistance, it contacts DOMS. DOMS notifies CINCFOR, who in turn tasks the appropriate CONUSA. All requests for military support will then be coordinated by that CONUSA. CONUSA receives the request for manpower, coordinates with FORSCOM who nominates a Corps to support and the CONUSA then coordinates with the nominated

agency. The CONUSA appoints a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO), and coordination between the CONUSA, BIFC, and the nominated agency (Corps) begins.

When assistance is required under the Stafford Act, after a "major disaster" has been declared, state officials submit their requests for assistance to the FEMA Regional Director, or the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO). The Regional Director or the FCO then requests military assistance from the CONUSA commander.

If a fire emergency is so serious that adherence to normal request channels would significantly endanger life or result in great loss of property, assistance can be requested from the nearest military installation. Rendering this assistance is appropriate and authorized under the Federal and DOD directives.<sup>36</sup>

#### ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

Military assistance to environmental emergencies is a function of a Response Plan that has been in place for over twenty years. The focal point of the plan is the bulk transport of oil and the threat this procedure holds over our navigable waters. The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Response System is the Federal government's mechanism for emergency response to discharges of oil into the navigable waters of the United States, and to releases of chemicals into the environment. The National Contingency Plan, part of that system, was

developed to ensure that the resources and expertise of the Federal government would be immediately available for those relatively rare but very serious oil and hazardous substance incidents requiring national or regional response. The plan provides a framework for management including, planning and coordination, on-scene operations and communications. The EPA and the Coast Guard share the responsibility for pollution clean-up, and the responsibilities are split Inland and Coastal. DOD provides expertise through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Navy. DOD provides the On-Scene Coordinator for all hazardous substance releases that originate from DOD facilities or vessels.<sup>37</sup>

The National Contingency Plan calls for Regional Response Teams (RRT) responsible for planning and preparedness before a pollution incident occurs, and coordination and advice after an incident occurs. AR 500-60 directs FORSCOM to ensure that Army representatives are appointed to the RRTs. There are two types of RRTs, the Standing RRT is high level and national in scope, and the Incident RRT comprised of local or regional members who have specific expertise or equipment which could assist in an emergency.<sup>38</sup>

#### CURRENT ACTIONS

Urban Search and Rescue- In the Federal Natural Disaster Response Plan (Figures 1&2), DOD accepted leadership of the

"Urban Search and Rescue" function. DOD acceptance was largely due to the absence of any more capable organization. The logic being that the military organizes large numbers of people into units and trains them for disciplined action together. Even if a civilian community had its own USR capability, and very few can afford to maintain a resource which can be used only in the event of a disaster, the disaster may be of such magnitude that preexisting capabilities are insufficient to cope with the demands. As stated earlier, the military is well suited for lending such assistance because their organizations and resources are geared to meeting the non-routine and the unexpected. It is understood by FEMA that DOD assets lack any professional or technical expertise in USR and DOD must rely on FEMA to produce teams having the necessary skills and technology. Thirty four USR teams have been recognized, outfitted, and funded. These teams belong to DOD upon Presidential declaration. Concerns addressing adequacy of numbers, training standards, and ultimate availability of these teams are being addressed. As military units are identified to perform USR, training will be conducted. Funding, tasks and training standards for this training are being addressed. Structural engineers are required for safe conduct of USR. A plan to identify structural engineers, nationwide, is being addressed. Chain of command for USR operations and the legal authorities required by DOD assets to conduct these operations are being reviewed.<sup>39</sup>

**DISENGAGING DOD ASSETS-** Procedures for disengaging DOD assets need to be established. Criteria for the departure of DOD assets from the scene need to be established at the onset. At what point can DOD declare their responsibilities completed and begin return of their relief functions to civil authorities?

**DCO TRAINING -** The DCO function is being assigned to various Colonel level positions in the CONUSAs, and CINCFOR is apparently satisfied with this concept. CINCFOR's concerns are the standardization of training, increased requests for this mission, and media interest in any such requirement.

**DCO MISSION -** The DCO mission is being assigned in some CONUSAs to the Commander of the Army Readiness Group. These Groups are commanded by Army colonels and have staffs ranging from 35 to 150 Army officers, NCOs, and civilians. Their normal duties are to assist training of Army Reserve and National Guard units located throughout their areas. Their staffs include all technical skills needed by their area units. For response to a major peacetime disaster, much of the Readiness Group staff could be diverted to coordinate DOD assets in support of civil authorities.<sup>40</sup>

**SUPPORT FUNCTIONS -** Requirements inherent in MSCD and MACA such as laundry, contracting officers, parts procurement, mail, flow of information, status reporting, mission prioritization and

use of PAOs are in need of standing operating procedures (SOPs). These SOPs are critical when considering the variety of units and missions possible for DOD assets. The requirements should also be considered prior to any unit deploying to perform disaster relief.

The references a Division G-3 should have available are:

Federal Response Plan, For Public Law 93-288, as amended, January, 1991. Available from FEMA.  
The 12 volume FORSCOM Domestic Emergency Planning System (DEPS), available from FORSCOM.

Volume 1-Contingency System Description-available.  
Volume 2-Civil Disturbance, Garden Plot-not available, in staffing.  
Volume 3-CINCFOR Postal Augmentation-available.  
Volume 4-Disaster Relief-combining with 5, not available.  
Volume 5-Catastrophic Earthquake Response, also used for hurricane response, to be combined with 4 in 1992.  
Volume 6-Environmental Instances, hazardous material spills, radiation leaks-not available.  
Volume 7-Wildfire fighting, done with BIFC-available.  
Volume 8-Animal Disease Eradication, addresses FORSCOM action if U.S. livestock are threatened by any of the 26 known foreign borne diseases-available.  
Volume 9-FORSCOM Augmentation Program-support of nuclear and chemical program-available.  
Volume 10-Search and Rescue, Air Force Rescue Center support-available.  
Volume 11-State and Special Funerals, prepared in concert with MDW-available.  
Volume 12-Support for the American National Red Cross-available.

## CONCLUSION

Each year in the United States literally hundreds of natural disasters occur. These events throw many organizations into the spotlight. From the periphery of society to center-stage quite often marches the military. Called upon to perform missions never trained for and to do so under extraordinary circumstances. These missions provide enormous challenges. This paper defines the big picture of disaster relief for the reader. It provides background on and definition to disaster relief. It also assists in identifying those actions and references critical to the military unit commander's successful planning, preparation and execution of disaster relief operations.

The facts speak for themselves:

- Our force is getting smaller.
- Modern man, and his modern armies, for all of their technical and cultural sophistication are still at the mercy of their environment.
- State and local authorities are increasingly unable to cope with disasters.

If the above information is not enough incentive to prepare for disaster relief operations, commanders should also consider that the potential to be called for similar operations outside the United States also exists. Therefore, commanders, prepare to be called. Insure you and your staff are familiar with the existing system, and you will be ready to respond if the need arises.

ENDNOTES

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4. Ibid., p.6.
5. Ibid., p.8.
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9. William A. Anderson, Military-Civilian Relations In Disaster Operations, Disaster Research Center, Ohio State University, 1968.
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14. Ibid., p.8.
15. Ibid., p. 8.

16. Ibid., p.4.
17. Ibid., p. 4.
18. Federal Response Plan, For Public Law 93-288, as amended, January, 1991, p.C-6, U.S. Government Printing Office: 1991, 523-833/40338, (hereafter referred to as "The Plan").
19. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
20. Ibid., p.7.
21. Ibid., p.1.
22. Ibid. p.3.
23. Ibid., p.10.
24. Ibid., p.10.
25. SITMAN., p.7.
26. SITMAN., p.7.
27. Reserve Officers Association, National Security Report, October, 1991, Washington, DC, p.36, (hereafter referred to as the "ROA REPORT").
28. Ibid., p.36.
29. SITMAN., p.23.
30. SITMAN, US&R PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS CHART, FIGURE 23, p. 26.
31. SITMAN., p.26.
32. SITMAN., p.27.
33. SITMAN, MASS CASUALTIES, p. 27.
34. SITMAN, WILDLAND FIRES, p. 12.
35. SITMAN, p. 12.
36. SITMAN., p.13.
37. SITMAN., p.16.
38. SITMAN, p. 17.
39. Report of Proceedings, Joint Command Readiness Program, CINCFOR/FEMA, October, 1991, pp.B31-32.

40. ROA REPORT., p.37.

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